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Save seniors meal program

Balancing the budget for the state should not be done on the backs of our oldest, most needy citizens. If Gov. Mark Sanford has his way, some 90 people in Aiken County and several thousand more around the state will lose their hot meals provided to them five days a week.

The governor wants to cut back the budget for the meals for seniors program around the state. He has said that a tight budget year and misguided priorities on the part of legislators is to blame. It is not, however, the legislators who are misguided on this issue.

Gov. Sanford's suggestion to cut money from the seniors program will take some vital interaction away from this group of South Carolinians. To some of these senior citizens, the hot meals program provides them with their only prepared meal of the day. And for some it is their only interaction with others. The volunteers who take the meals to these residents or who see them at the Council on Aging office get a chance to see if their clients are doing well or if there is some immediate need that is required.

The funds for seniors are also used to pay energy bills, homemaking, meal preparation and cleaning costs. While the governor said that the amount he is proposing to cut is just a small percentage of the total for the program, it is extremely important to those individuals who will be dropped if the money is not available.

South Carolina is a better state than wanting to take hot food from the mouths of those who have been the heart and soul of the state for the past 60 years and more.